

**From:** Finman, Hodayah [Finman.Hodayah@epa.gov]  
**Sent:** 1/27/2021 6:49:28 PM  
**To:** OITA-EVERYONE [OITAEVERYONE@epa.gov]  
**Subject:** OIA Weekly Jan 14-27, 2021

**OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (OIA)**  
**January 14 – January 27, 2021**



**EPA Facilitates Session During First U.S. National Food Systems Dialogues**

Then acting Administrator Jane Nishida served as a facilitator for a session focused on “Environmentally Sustainable Production” that included key stakeholders from industry trade groups, civil society, and academia as part of the US preparations for the UN Secretary-General’s Food Systems Summit. The Summit will be held in September 2021 as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development goals. UN member countries will be hosting a series of National Food Systems Dialogues to help inform domestic policymakers. The USDA convened the first of three National Food Systems Dialogues on January 13 with the goal to better understand food system challenges, identify possible solutions, and create pathways towards achieving more sustainable food systems within the United States. Several thematic challenges identified included access to available financing and technological innovations, changing regulations, lack of available data, international trade barriers, and the persistent and extreme threats posed by climate change. EPA will continue to engage in the next National Food Systems Dialogues that are currently scheduled to be held in March and May. [Chang, Torney]

**CEC Alternate Representatives Meeting**

Acting OITA AA Mark Kasman represented EPA during a Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) Alternate Representatives’ video conference on Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Alt Reps discussed potential scenarios for holding the 2021 Council Session, which will be hosted by the United States as Council Chair. They agreed to consider the following options for holding the event: (1) fully in person (in fall 2021), (2) hybrid in person/virtual, and (3) fully virtual. The Alt Reps will bring this topic to their Ministers for their input and share their reactions in the near future. The Parties also received an update regarding the 5 kickoff projects that are currently being developed by trilateral expert committees. They also discussed the upcoming operational plan and the potential for a new rolling plan that would include different timelines for projects and provide potential announces for each Council Session. Initial reactions were positive, and we anticipate a more formal reaction in the next few weeks. In addition, the Alt Reps discussed a proposal for a Council-supported initiative on traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) regarding freshwater management and expressed initial support for it. This initiative is being developed as a deliverable for the 2021 Council Session. [Hong]

**EPA – European Environment Agency (EEA) Meeting**

EPA and EEA counterparts hosted a joint webinar on MS Teams on January 27, to share information on the 2020 European State of the Environment Report, the EPA Report on the Environment and to share perspectives on environment and health indicators as well as key emerging topics being considered in indicators efforts in the US and EU. ORD's National Program Director Mike Slimak moderated the event, with Acting Assistant Administrators from ORD and OITA providing opening remarks. The EEA Director, Hans Bruyninckx, provided remarks and an overview of the recently released EEA State of the Environment Report. Over 250 participants joined the meeting. The second half of the meeting consisted of a panel discussion with panelists from Europe and the US, highlighting innovative trends and approaches being taken on both sides of the Atlantic on environment and health indicators. Strong indications for increased cooperation between EPA and EEA were mentioned by several of the speakers as well as the critical importance of evidence-based programs and policies. The importance of the Transatlantic relationship was highlighted, by the EEA Director and he stressed, "We have a story to tell together [on the environment] and it is stronger to tell it together." The Director was invited to visit EPA again soon, when travel allows, and EPA officials were also invited to the EEA by the EEA Director noting that EPA has not visited in person in a long time. Staff will move forward to advance EPA/EEA cooperation, first with internal brainstorming and then initially through likely quarterly discussions with EEA colleagues. [Buckley]

### **Interagency Policy Committee (IPC) on G7 and G20**

On Tuesday, January 26, the White House convened its first IPC on the G7 and G20 for 2021. Acting Sherpa Peter Harrell chaired the discussion which focused on the priorities that have been outlined for the UK presidency of the G7 and the Italian presidency of the G20. The White House shared a readout from last week's G20 Sherpa Meeting and a preview of the upcoming Sherpa meeting for G7. Among the highlights are the welcome response from G7 and G20 members on the US announcement to re-enter the Paris Agreement, our renewed ambition on climate change, and the outcomes expected from both fora. The White House intends to convene these discussions on a more regular, periodic basis and has encouraged information sharing among interagency partners engaged in the various tracks. [Finman, Huber]

### **EPA co-authors UNEP Foresight Brief Article on the Need to Eliminate Lead Paint**

In December 2020, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) published a Foresight Brief on "[The Need to Eliminate Lead Paint Globally](#)" co-authored by the University of Pennsylvania, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (OITA), and the National Council for Science and Environment. Lead paint causes serious harm to children with lifelong consequences yet is largely unregulated in the developing world. The article stresses that eliminating the danger of lead-paint exposure is a globally achievable goal and encourages the world community to support the effort to eliminate lead paint, especially in countries without legally binding controls on lead paint. It highlights work of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, which is a UN partnership that is working to remove this harm by helping countries develop lead paint laws. UNEP, OITA and the co-authors intended for this article to raise awareness of the serious problem caused by lead paint, that children can be protected from exposure to lead paint through the enactment of laws, and that the Alliance can offer assistance in developing those laws. [Smith, Bandemehr]

### **EPA Provides Input to World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board Meeting**

EPA (OITA, OCSPP, ORD, OHS) provided input to the US Department of Health and Human Services on several papers prepared for the WHO Executive Board Meeting, which took place January 18-26, 2021. OITA staff provided input and coordinated reviews by EPA experts on papers about anti-microbial resistance (AMR) and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). EPA's comments covered addressing air quality in the midterm review of the Global Action Plan on NCDs, the environmental impacts of AMR, and reviewing pesticides policy suggestions. The full Executive Board Meeting agenda and recordings can be found [here](#). Many of the same topics will be further discussed or reviewed at the World Health Assembly, which will begin at the end of May 2021. [Besch]

### **OIA Delivers Opening Remarks on EPIC at Gobeshona Conference Event**

On January 20<sup>th</sup>, OIA was invited to serve as moderator and deliver opening remarks on EPIC at the Gobeshona

Global Conference on Locally-Led Adaptation Action, in a session on African Research Action Partnerships. On hand for the session were members of the EPIC Africa Secretariat and members of a Kenyan initiative known as the Nairobi City Risk Hub working on assessing climate-related water risks in Nairobi. The Gobeshona Conference took place from January 18-24 and featured sessions throughout the day for 7 consecutive days, 24 hours each day, and is the largest international gathering of adaptation researchers, policymakers and practitioners focusing on locally led adaptation action from around the world. The EPIC model and the EPIC Africa network were well received and garnered a great deal of interest including that of the conference organizers. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary General of the UN, was also on hand, digitally, to deliver the opening remarks to the conference. [Socci]

### **EPA Provides Input on Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Reports**

OITA coordinated a review of three IPBES documents workplans by EPA experts in OW and ORD and provided input to US Geological Survey staff, who lead US input into IPBES. EPA experts provided comments on two IPBES assessment scoping documents, a nexus assessment and a transformative change assessment, and reviewed the draft contributions of the IPBES task forces to these assessments for an intersessional 2021-2022 period. EPA technical staff have regularly engaged in aspects of IPBES work and will continue to track these reports and other IPBES work in relevant areas, in particular around water and biodiversity. [Besch]

### **United Nations Food Systems Summit Interagency Planning Meeting**

This week, OITA participated in an interagency working-level United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) Planning Meeting led by State Department. The UN will convene a Food Systems Summit in New York on September 13, 2021, to raise global awareness and global actions to transform food systems to address hunger and reduce diet-related disease. State is leading the interagency process of communicating positive areas of US engagement as they relate to the Action Tracks proposed by the Summit organizers. An interagency memo is being drafted and will be presented to the incoming Biden administration officials to highlight the UNFSS. The first US National Dialogue (out of three) was successfully convened by USDA on January 13th, and USDA will circulate a readout next week. The second National Dialogue is planned for March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The next interagency working level UNFSS meeting will be held February 9<sup>th</sup>. [Huber, Chang, Torney, Finman]

### **Arctic Council ACAP Short Lived Climate Pollutants Expert Group Meeting**

OITA participated in the Arctic Council's Arctic Contaminants Action Program Working Group (ACAP WG) Short Lived Climate Pollutants Expert Group (SLCP EG) meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup>. Topics of discussion included upcoming deliverables for the ACAP Working Group meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, how the SLCP EG can help shape the ACAP webinar on health impacts of particulate matter and black carbon, which is tentatively planned for early 2021, and the SLCP EG's workplan to engage with other Arctic Council working groups on a wildfire project. The next SLCP EG meeting is tentatively planned for February 2021. [Finman, Huber, Torney]

### **OITA Meets with Embassy of Indonesia to Introduce EPA's International Cooperation**

On January 26, OITA met with the Embassy of Indonesia to share information about the organization and structure of EPA and described how the Agency engages in multilateral and bilateral environment cooperation. The Embassy of Indonesia expressed interest in learning about EPA's priorities and how they will be implemented at the international level. The Embassy explained that the Indonesia government has recently expressed greater commitment addressing environment challenges as it aspires to develop the economy sustainably. EPA had a memorandum of understanding with the Indonesian Ministry of Environment between 2011-2016 to cooperate on array of mutual environmental issues and included several successful activities on transboundary air pollution and environmental enforcement. [Chen, Ferrante]

### **EPA Advances Cooperation with Taiwan Environmental Protection Administration**

On January 27, EPA held a virtual discussion with counterparts at Toxic and Chemical Substances Bureau (TCSB) in Taiwan's Environmental Protection Administration. The team presented information on the registration review process, focusing on recent updates with Naphthalene and P dichlorobenzene (PDCB). EPA

will share additional resources with the TCSB team and provide updates throughout the process. OITA was joined on this call by Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention. [Jakob, Sherman, Emdur, Harris, Lee, Ferrante]

### **Interagency Plastics Scrap Call**

OIA staff participated in a State Department hosted the monthly interagency call on plastics scrap. In addition to State and EPA, other participating agencies included Commerce, Energy, USAID, NASA, NIST, NSF, NOAA, USTR and Coast Guard. The U.S. Coast Guard presented on how they manage waste generated on ships. DOE shared updates on their Plastics Innovation Challenge Roadmap and Request for Information [here](#). State will co-host a [webcast event](#) with the Wilson Center called, “*Sea to Sea: How satellites can help identify and combat plastic marine debris*”. Finally, EPA/ORD shared they are developing a lifecycle assessment methodology for determining mass flows of marine litter and plastics. [Adrian, Vauter]

### **In the News**

#### **Japan Reaches out to EPA to Discuss Bilateral Priorities and Climate**

The Minister of the Environment of Japan, Shinjiro Koizumi, released a statement welcoming the United States’ rejoining of the Paris Agreement and conveyed the letter to EPA and Acting Administrator Jane Nishida. In sharing the statement, the Ministry also indicated their interest in revisiting and reinvigorating the U.S.-Japan relationship on environmental protection and climate change, sharing initial thoughts on cooperative areas the EPA and Ministry can partner on. EPA and Ministry of the Environment of Japan officials will have an initial discussion on these topics via teleconference. [Novikoff]

#### **Israel Appoints New Ambassador to the United States**

Israel has appointed Gilad Erdan to the role of Ambassador to the United States, beginning in January 2021. He also currently serves as Israel’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York since August 2020. Prior to his appointment, Erdan served as a Member of Knesset from 2003 to 2020 and in several ministerial positions. From 2015-2020, Erdan was Israel’s Minister of Strategic Affairs. Erdan served as Minister for Environmental Protection from 2009-2013, where he worked on Climate Change. [Kuklinski]

#### **Restoration Executive Order on Climate Preparedness, Adaptation and Resilience**

On January 20<sup>th</sup> President Biden issued an Executive Order on *Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis* instructing federal agencies to recommit to a suite of Obama-era regulations stemming from EO 13653 of 2013 aimed at addressing climate preparedness, adaptation and resilience. EO 13653 called for federal agencies to support the efforts of regions, states, local communities, tribes, and partners to increase their resilience to climate change while ensuring continued protection of public health and the environment. In addition to an agency-wide strategy, EPA further mandated the creation of office-specific adaptation strategies. It seems reasonable to assume that a similar inter-agency body will be re-constituted to oversee this commitment to support the efforts of states, local governments, tribes and international partners to adapt, build resilience and prepare for the impacts of climate change. [Socci]

### **Upcoming Events**

**Bilateral Call with Ministry of Environment Japan**, January 17, virtual

**Israeli Ministry of Environmental Protection Discussion on Oil Spill Prevention and Response**: February 2, virtual

**OECD Environmental Policy Committee Meeting (EPOC)**, February 10-12, virtual

**Step E-Waste Meeting**: February 17-18, virtual

**5<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5)**: February 22-26, virtual

**LBS Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee meeting (STAC)**: March 17-18, virtual

**G20 1st Environment Senior Officials Meeting**: March 24, virtual

Hodayah Finman  
Acting Office Director  
Office of International Affairs  
US Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW (MC 2670R)  
Washington DC 20004  
+1-202-564-1893 (tel)  
finman.hodayah@epa.gov